

Frequently Asked Questions

AS Drama and Theatre Studies

6DR01 Unit 1: Exploration of Drama and Theatre

6DR02 Unit 2: Theatre Text in Performance

A2 Drama and Theatre Studies

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6DR04 Unit 4: Theatre Text in Context

6DR01 Unit 1: Exploration of Drama and Theatre

Are there example materials available for this course?

Examples are available on the Edexcel website

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/drama/Pages/default.aspx>

What are the criteria for the different time periods for Unit 1 texts?

The function of Unit 1 is to provide a base on which to build the knowledge and skills required for this AS level qualification. Therefore it is appropriate to demand that students are provided with breadth as well as depth in the choice of texts. There is no fixed time span, but at least ten years between times of writing is suggested as a minimum. However, more importantly, the texts chosen must reflect the educational needs of students in the centre, for instance their prior drama experience, and provide them with ample opportunity to fulfil the assessment requirements of the unit.

What constitutes a 'period' e.g. decades or more than that? Would Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Berkoff's *Metamorphosis* be suitable, for example?

*See above answer. As *Metamorphosis* was written as a play in 1969 and *Look Back in Anger* in 1956, these two texts would work very well for Unit 1. They provide opportunities to explore at least two different practitioner approaches i.e. Stanislavski and Brecht or Berkoff, or all three and can be described as contrasting texts as required in the specification.*

If we are preparing workshop sessions with assessment criteria in mind and explore, for instance, interpretation in a key session/series of sessions, with one group performing a presentational 'version' and another presenting 'naturalistically', would there be any problem with all students referring to the same workshop content in their Exploration Notes?

Students may refer to their own workshop experiences and things they have seen, including professional theatre. These are all legitimate Unit 1 experiences. Each student is assessed individually, on his or her own merit,

in both practical and written work.

Can we have a more specific break down of the sections for the Exploration Notes?

The specification breaks down the requirements for this unit in some detail in both the unit overview and the assessment information paragraphs. Each centre will devise the most appropriate ways of students capturing their ideas and learning over the course of the teaching for Unit 1. Each student, under guidance from their teacher, will determine the format of the final version of their Exploration Notes for assessment. The quality of the written communication is vital so notes must be produced that communicate the learning and achievement of each student.

Can the Exploration Notes be amalgamated under headings e.g. language and non-verbal communication or characterisation and vocal awareness?

There are no prescribed ways of producing the final versions for Unit 1 Exploration Notes; only the word count is fixed. It is up to centres how students record their learning experiences throughout the duration of their Unit 1 work and then to guide learners in the best format and ways of producing their final notes. The final versions of the Exploration Notes must be produced individually, under controlled conditions.

What are controlled conditions?

Please refer to the Further Guidance document available on the Edexcel GCE 2008 website:

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/drama/Pages/default.aspx>

In the notes for each heading does the candidate have to write on each text?

Yes. Exploration Notes must be fit for the purpose of achieving the assessment criteria for the unit. All of the areas of exploration must be covered, with a sense of balance applied across both texts.

Do students have to write in continuous prose in Unit 1 notes for assessment?

The final, assessed Exploration Notes must communicate the learning achieved by students and allow them to achieve the assessment criteria. The quality of written communication is very important throughout this examination. Students must select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and the complex subject matter. An essay is not demanded of them; diagrams and sketches may be employed where these help the communication of the student voice.

Can Unit 1 notes be a comparative format?

Yes. This is one of the accepted approaches to completing the Unit 1 notes.

Can the 3,000 words be a combined response to both plays?

Yes. 3,000 words need to be produced overall.

On the video do we need to identify in the time sheet when specific candidates are hitting particular criteria during that lesson?

Yes. All candidates will be identified at the start of the workshop and the teacher will further identify which student is deemed top, middle and bottom, for that workshop.

Does the teacher moderate the three candidates from the recording, or during the session itself? The camera may pick up things the teacher does not - and vice-versa.

The teacher should moderate in the workshop; there will be an opportunity to state why the three choices have been made.

Will there be INSET meetings? When?

More information regarding training events is available on the Edexcel website: <http://www.edexcel.com/resources/training/Pages/default.aspx>

Can the students draw set/costumes within the live theatre evaluation of unit 1?

Yes, if this aids communication of their ideas. Any annotation will contribute to the final word count.

Can a student write about a studied text in the live theatre evaluation notes?

Yes; some centres may see this as desirable since the act of seeing one of the studied texts in performance should enhance understanding. There is a minimum of two plays for this unit, but students may see and indeed study as many as are deemed appropriate in each centre and the needs of its students.

When is the deadline for the submission of Unit 1 for the current specification?

15 May in the year of the examination.

Can a student re-sit this unit?

Yes. Students can redo the written or practical work for 6DR01 in the following June examination series. Teachers must ensure that all of the supporting evidence is submitted to moderators as outlined in the specification.

6DR02 Unit 2: Theatre Text in Performance

SECTION A (Monologue or Duologue)

Please define what is meant by “a complete and substantial playtext”

Candidates must choose a play that is taken from a complete, professionally published and substantial playtext written for theatrical performance. Centres are advised to select a complete and substantial playtext which has at least two substantial roles, lasts at least one hour in performance and has been published with an ISBN number. All candidates must work on the complete playtext in preparation for Section A. The texts used by each student must be available prior to the performance.

Is it acceptable for the candidate to set the monologue/duologue briefly into context before starting - this may help the audience response to it?

No, this should be done via the written documentation.

Can the written concept for Section A be completed as three bullet pointed sections?

Yes.

Is the annotated script part of the student mark for Section A rationale?

Yes. The annotations must be included in the total 500 word count.

Is the annotated script part of the total word count for Section A rationale?

Yes. The 500 words includes annotations but does not include the words of the text to be performed.

Can the annotated script for Section A be A4 mounted onto A3?

No. A4 only.

Can the annotated script provide evidence of interpretation leaving more room in the rationale for social, cultural, historical and political context?

Yes.

Is the social, cultural, historical and political context based on the extract or the whole play?

The whole play.

Does the 'intention' of the concept for Section A impact on the mark for the reality of the performance?

Separate marks are awarded for the concept and the performance.

Is the end of May likely to be the end of the examination period or will there be an opportunity to go into June?

Yes; the examination period begins on 1st February and ends on 27th May.

In monologues and duologues can the students link up the parts with their own sentences?

No. Only the words of the text can be performed.

Can we use monologues and duologues from Section B texts as long as those students are not in the play they are taken from?

Yes. All students must use 2 different texts for Section A and B in Unit 2.

Is it true that examiners prefer more stylised practical work?

No. It is the centre's responsibility to choose texts that will best support their students to achieve in the criteria.

What is meant by 'director's interpretation'?

To clarify intention for realisation of the text in performance.

How much should the teacher be involved in preparing for Section A?

The student will research and own the work, the teacher will support and guide; the teacher should help with the selection, preparation and direction.

Could the written elements of Unit 2 Section A as defined on page 26 and page 28 of the specification be incorporated into one piece of writing?

Yes.

Could a monologue/duologue for Section A be made up out of speeches throughout a text or does it have to be a continuous speech in the play?

The chosen extracts must be coherent and the context must reflect the complete playtext.

Can there be extra non-speaking students on stage to support Section A monologue/duologue candidates?

No. Only the monologue/duologue candidate(s) being examined in the performance are permitted to be in the performance space.

Can candidates begin again if they lose focus during the performance of their monologue/duologue?

No. The time limits apply from the time the monologue/duologue begins and the examiner will stop marking after 2/5 minutes.

Must design candidates work with monologue/duologue candidates on the text?

Yes. Design candidates must work with monologue/duologue candidates.

Will the visiting examiner question design candidates for Section A or B?

No. There is an error on page 27 of the specification. The examiner will not question or respond to the design candidate's presentation.

Can the teacher ask questions to design candidates after their presentation?

No, this is not permitted.

Can design candidates record their presentations?

Yes. The centre must ensure the recording is available for the examiner to view immediately before the performance for both Section A and Section B.

Will the visiting examiner take away any design documentation for Section A or B?

No. The centre must ensure all documentation is clearly seen in the recording sent to the examiner after the performances.

How important is accent in Unit 2 performances?

Edexcel has no issues with accent. It is a centre choice if students wish to perform using an accent.

Can I adapt the texts to change the gender of some roles?

Edexcel has no issues with cross gender casting.

What should I do if not all Section A or B performances/presentations have been recorded?

You must give details on the Video/DVD Time Sheet. It will not be possible for these students' work to be checked as part of the examiner monitoring system or for an Enquiry About Results (EAR) to be requested.

For section A, should students wear costumes and have lighting props etc?

There is no requirement for students to have any of the above but centres can provide them if they wish to support students.

Will Edexcel approve or recommend texts for Unit 2?

No. Edexcel will not approve or recommend texts. The choice is entirely the centre's responsibility.

When the students perform their monologues, do they talk to the audience or do they pretend that there is somebody on stage?

This would depend on the chosen monologue and the interpretation as detailed in the written performance concept. Either would meet the requirements of the unit as long as the examiner has been given the context for the performance.

Can a student re-sit this unit?

Yes. Students can re-sit this unit, however, they must re-sit both sections A and B between 1st February and 27th May in the following June examination series. The number of sessions/visits that a centre is entitled to will be determined by the total number of candidates (including re-sit candidates) entered for the examination of unit 6DR02.

SECTION B (Group Performance)

Please define what is meant by “a complete and substantial playtext”

Candidates must choose a playtext that has at least two substantial roles, lasts at least one hour in performance and has been published with an ISBN number and written for theatrical performance. All candidates must work on the complete playtext in preparation for Section B. The texts used by each student must be available prior to the performance.

Is the end of May likely to be the end of the examination period or will there be an opportunity to go into June?

Yes; the examination period begins on 1st February and ends on 27th May.

Is it true that examiners prefer more stylised practical work?

No. It is the centre’s responsibility to choose texts that will best support their students to achieve in the criteria.

What is meant by ‘director’s interpretation’?

To clarify intention for realisation of the text in performance.

For Section B could we direct one act or section from a play only rather than an edited version of the whole text?

No. The work should reflect the narrative arc of the text.

For Section B, can a complete playtext be performed by different groups for example one act per group?

No, as this does not enable the students to demonstrate in performance a knowledge of the complete playtext.

How important is lighting, costumes, props etc?

Unless you have design students, performance candidates are awarded marks only for the criteria printed in the specification. Centres may choose to provide these to support their students in performance but they are not a requirement.

Will the visiting examiner question design candidates for Section A or B?

No. There is an error on page 27 of the specification. The examiner will not question or respond to the design candidate’s presentation.

Can the teacher ask questions to design candidates after their presentation?

No, this is not permitted.

Can design candidates record their presentations?

Yes. The centre must ensure the recording is available for the examiner to view immediately before the performance for both Section A and Section B.

Will the visiting examiner take away any design documentation for Section A or B?

No. The centre must ensure all documentation is clearly seen in the recording sent to the examiner after the performances.

How important is accent in Unit 2 performances?

Edexcel has no issues with accent. It is a centre choice if students wish to perform using an accent.

Can I adapt the texts to change the gender of some roles?

Edexcel has no issues with cross gender casting.

For Section B, does each performance student have to complete a written performance concept?

No. There is an error on page 25 of the specification. Only design students must present a written concept to the visiting examiner. The Interpretation Notes are the responsibility of the teacher/director (please see page 27 of the specification).

How much should the teacher be involved in preparing for Section B?

It is the teacher's responsibility to choose, adapt, cast and direct the group performances for Section B.

What should I do if not all Section A or B performances/presentations have been recorded?

You must give details on the Video/DVD Time Sheet. It will not be possible for these students' work to be checked as part of the examiner monitoring system or for an Enquiry About Results (EAR) to be requested.

Will Edexcel approve or recommend texts for Unit 2?

No. Edexcel will not approve or recommend texts. The choice is entirely the centre's responsibility.

Can a student re-sit this unit?

Yes. Students can re-sit this unit, however, they must re-sit both sections A and B between 1st February and 27th May in the following June examination series.

The number of sessions/visits that a centre is entitled to will be determined by the total number of candidates (including re-sit candidates) entered for the examination of unit 6DR02.

6DR03 Unit 3: Exploration of Dramatic Performance

What is the word limit for the SWED?

The recommended maximum word limit for the SWED is 3,500 words.

Does the SWED have to follow a particular format?

The SWED has to adhere to the recommended word limit and it must address the 6 questions as outlined on page 42 of the specification.

Do we have to use a play text for Unit 3?

You can use a play text for Unit 3, you don't have to.

Is Unit 3 entirely devised?

Unit 3 can be entirely devised, but it doesn't have to be.

What are the group sizes for Unit 3?

The number of performance candidates in a group must be between 3 and 6 candidates plus up to 3 design candidates who must each offer a different skill. Centres must not exceed these numbers. If only 2 candidates are entered, a non-assessed candidate may participate to help reach the minimum requirement of 3.

Do I need an audience for the Unit 3 performance?

Unit 3 must be performed to an audience.

How much is the performance worth?

The performance itself is worth 25% of the unit.

How much is the SWED worth?

The SWED is worth 50% of the unit.

How much is the actual PROCESS worth?

The PROCESS is worth 25% of the unit.

What is the deadline for Unit 3?

The deadline for Unit 3 is mid-May towards the end of the A2 year. The deadline is set by QCDA and is the same for all subjects.

Who marks the Unit 3 work?

The four assessment objectives for Unit 3 are marked by the teacher examiner, then moderated externally.

Should the SWED be individual work or group work?

The SWED must be an individual student's own unaided work.

Should the SWED be annotated?

The SWED should contain the teacher's annotations, marks and comments to help the moderator see how they have arrived at the final mark.

Do titles of the questions count in the word count?

The titles of the questions do NOT count towards the final word count.

How should the SWED be presented?

The SWED must have the candidate's name on each and every page submitted. It must be on paper only, securely fastened with a staple and not be in a plastic wallet of any sort.

Do play extracts count in the word count?

If a candidate includes a play extract/s in their SWED, these words do not count in the final word count.

Do a candidate's annotations on diagrams/script extracts etc count in the word count?

ALL annotations that are the candidate's own work, count towards the final word count.

I only have 7 candidates, can they work as one group of 7?

Groups of 7 performance candidates are not allowed.

Do we have to do all the Unit 3 performances in the same session?

If you have more than one group, you can choose to do their performances on different occasions, the timing of the performances is the decision of the centre.

Can a candidate still get marks for Research & Exploration and Evaluation if they don't submit a SWED?

Research & Exploration and Evaluation can only be assessed through the SWED, if the SWED is missing, then there are no marks for these objectives.

Do we have to film the Unit 3 performance?

It is essential that the Unit 3 performance is filmed. Without this filmed evidence, the centre risks losing the performance marks. If the video/DVD evidence is lost, the centre must submit missing coursework forms through their Examinations Officer.

Do we have to film the Unit 3 Process/Rehearsal?

Currently, you do not need to film a process/rehearsal session.

How long should the Unit 3 performance be?

The Unit 3 performance should last a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes. Smaller groups should tend towards the lower time limit and larger groups towards the upper time limit.

Can a student offer more than one skill for Unit 3 e.g. can they perform and design?

Yes, they can, however, they must select which skill they are going to be assessed on. Centres with small numbers may find it beneficial for students to be involved in more than one element of the Unit but in order to be assessed equitably with other candidates, they must be assessed on only one skill.

How are design and directing candidates assessed?

Design and directing candidates are assessed in much the same way as performance candidates.

The creative process i.e. Development & Structure is assessed by the teacher-examiner and is worth 25%.

Research & Exploration & Evaluation are assessed through the SWED and together are worth 50%.

Performance is worth 25% and requires a presentation (maximum 10 minutes) to the teacher-examiner and to camera before the actual performance starts. It can take place in front of an audience or in a more private place, on the set, or not. The teacher-examiner then marks the performance taking into account the intentions stated in the presentation and their realisation in the actual performance.

Do you recommend a candidate to offer two skills for Unit 3?

No. It might be useful for a design candidate to offer two skills e.g. lighting with sound, but it is hard to see any benefits for a design or directing candidate to also perform in the piece. The maximum number of performers must never exceed 6 with or without a director/designer participating. The vast majority of candidates as PERFORMERS will self-direct within the process in order to make the performance work for all of them. A group of performers may also help with the design elements but that doesn't mean to say that they will also offer design or directing as well as performance. We think candidates will maximise their chances when they concentrate on one skill and do it well.

Can a student re-sit this unit?

Yes. Students can redo the written or practical work for 6DR03 in the following June examination series. Teachers must ensure that all of the supporting evidence is submitted to moderators as outlined in the specification.

6DR04 Unit 4: Theatre Text in Context

Where do I buy copies of the Edexcel texts?

The Edexcel editions of the texts are available to download from the Edexcel website. Teachers may wish to buy a copy of the published version of the chosen text as these contain additional notes and the ISBN numbers of these texts are on page 84 of the specification.

What texts can be taken into the examination?

Candidates will only be allowed to take the Edexcel edition of the set text into the examination. Copies of the set texts can be downloaded from the Edexcel website.

By original performance conditions do you mean the first ever production of the play?

Candidates need to have an understanding of the social, cultural and historical context surrounding the writing and performing of the play and its relevance to students themselves and a contemporary audience for Section A and Section B. For Section C they should consider and understand the social, cultural and historical context of the play in relation to its performance history as witnessed in the live performance in relation to what it might have been like in its original performance. We are looking here for an understanding of the performance conditions of the time period as it is not always possible to pin a specific play down to a specific first night. See also responses below that relate to specific texts and productions of specific plays.

We used Lysistrata for Unit 1, can we also use it for Unit 4?

No. You need to be very careful with choices of text across the specification. There are only three prescribed texts from which centres choose one to explore in unit 4 and the chosen text must not be used in any other unit.

My students prefer another edition of the set text, can they use that instead of the Edexcel version?

No. The texts to be used are the official Edexcel texts, nothing else. All page numbers and references in the questions in Section A and Section B refer to the Edexcel editions of the texts, available to download from the website. Only annotated copies of these texts will be permitted in the examination room.

For the examination, what do we assume to be the social, cultural, and historical context of Woyzeck?

It was written in 1836 (although not completed), published in 1878/79 and first performed in 1913. There are clearly defined theatrical developments during this period, up to the outbreak of the First World War, all of which could add relevance to any discussion of the play in order for students to create and justify a performance for a 21st century audience. It might be for students preparing a concept that the first performance of the play in 1913 and its place within that context will provide a more immediate starting point but others may have a more wide-ranging approach to reflecting on the various movements within 19th century theatre.

How much annotation should there be in the text for Section A and Section B?

This is a difficult question to answer. If there is too much annotation, then students will not have time in the examination to access the specific information they might need in order to answer the question. If there is not

enough, then students will struggle to engage with the examination itself. There certainly needs to be annotation that will prompt responses to the demands of Section A and the demands of Section B but the annotated text is not the answer to the question, it is the memory bank that supports the answer.

I am looking at off text and text-based rehearsal ideas with my group but do not know which techniques are better for the examination. Can you help?

The simple answer is in the word appropriate that appears in the specification. There is nothing that defines what is and is not appropriate for a director working with a company in order to explore rehearsal methods/techniques for Section A. It may be that some techniques and methods are more appropriate for one of the texts than another, but it is the candidate, in the role of director writing and justifying their approach that earns the marks.

How faithful to the original does the concept/interpretation have to be for Section B?

We have to be careful here as the interpretation or concept needs to reflect an understanding of the historical context of the original but then define how it might be brought to life for a 21st century audience. The student is in the role of director and the interpretation needs to demonstrate an understanding of the original. This may mean that there are visual references for audience that connects the past and the present and it may mean that there are cuts and edits to the original for production purposes.

We cannot get to see a live production for Section C because of the location of our college. Can we watch a video of a performance?

No. The only exception to this is for some overseas centres that have extreme difficulty accessing live theatre of any kind. The production for Section C needs to be carefully considered before the choice is made for the Section A and Section B text and centres are advised to arrange a theatre visit as soon as possible in the academic year, possibly combining the visit with the unit 1 requirements too.

How many words can students take in for their notes?

The notes for Section C must be no more than 1,000 words. A suggested format for the notes and a front sheet for centres to complete are in the ICE document on the website.

Do the research notes for Section C need to be completed under controlled conditions?

Although it does not state this as a requirement in the specification, it is a useful way of ensuring that students have compiled notes that are their own work and teachers will then feel more comfortable signing the front sheet to confirm this.

There is a production of Doctor Faustus coming to our local theatre. Can we use this for Section C if we are not studying it for Sections A and B?

Yes. There is nothing in the specification to say that you cannot do this.

We are planning to see Miss Julie for Section C. Do we need to research its original performance conditions in Sweden?

Although written in 1888, the first performance of Miss Julie in Stockholm did not happen until approximately 20 years later, after the play had first been produced elsewhere. It is therefore a legitimate exercise to explore theatrical developments in European Theatre and Strindberg's contribution to these with Miss Julie in performance as a focal point to the exploration.

Are drawings/sketches/diagrams permitted in the examination?

Yes. A well-supported sketch or diagram can often illustrate a point very effectively. There are no marks for the drawing itself, but there are marks for the way students use it to demonstrate understanding through their writing that support the drawing. All drawings should be done in black pen, however, or they will be too faint for the scanning process.

The specification mentions quality of written communication a lot. How is this assessed in Unit 4?

The sample mark scheme in the sample assessment materials available to download from the website, gives a clear indication of what is required. The phrase 'coherent and knowledgeable response' relates to the highest level of marks in Section B and Section C and will form part of the evidence gathering for the examiner in assessing a candidate's response. It is worth reading the sample assessment material in order to gain a better understanding of what an examiner will be looking for.

I am going to advise my students to answer the questions in the order they appear in the question paper, is this the best thing to do?

There is logic in taking Section A and Section B as one experience for the students in the examination. It may be, therefore, that some students will answer Section C first, then go back to A and B. There cannot be any rule

about this, but it is worth exploring with students and seeing which approach suits the individual.

What happens to the texts and the production notes after the examination?

These should be retained in the centre until the end of the enquiry period. They may be useful for guiding students for the following year.

Will there be INSET meetings? When?

More information regarding training events is available on the Edexcel website: <http://www.edexcel.com/resources/training/Pages/default.aspx>

Can a student re-sit this unit?

Yes. Students can re-sit the complete paper in the next June examination series.

Contact Us:



GCE 0844 576 0025
One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH
drama.assessment@edexcel.com



gcedramaandperformingarts@edexcelexperts.co.uk



www.edexcelonline.com



<http://edexcel--5571.custhelp.com/app/home>



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